



Dr. Dorothy Height Receives Congressional Gold Medal

March 24, 2004

President Bush presents honor to civil rights leader, grassroots organizer for lifetime work

Washington — President Bush today presented Dr. Dorothy I. Height, on the occasion of her 92nd birthday, the Congressional Gold Medal for her lasting legacy of public service and lifetime achievements in civil rights. The United States Capitol Rotunda was the site of the ceremony.

Prepared and struck by the United States Mint, the medal honors the work of Dr. Height, who has devoted her life to grassroots organizations created to fight racism, sexism, inequality, poverty and other societal ills. In the 1960s, she stood on the front line in the battles for civil rights for African Americans and equal rights for women.

Since 1958, Dr. Height has led the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), an organization founded in 1937 by her mentor and friend, the late Mary McLeod Bethune. The NCNW promotes black family values and sponsors the annual Black Family Reunion held each September on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

On December 6, 2003, President Bush approved Public Law 108–162, which provides for the production and presentation of a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Height and authorizes the United States Mint to produce and sell to the public bronze duplicates of the medal.

The medal's obverse (heads side), designed by United States Mint sculptor/engraver Donna Weaver, depicts a portrait of Dr. Height in one of her signature hats. To the right of her image is the inscription: "ACT OF CONGRESS 2003." Her name, "DOROTHY I. HEIGHT," is inscribed under the portrait.

The reverse (tails side), designed by United States Mint sculptor/engraver John Mercanti, features the National Council of Negro Women's building, which is located at 633 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. A depiction of the United States Capitol can be seen in the background. The reverse includes the following quote by Dr. Height: "We African American Women seldom do just what we want to do, but always what we have to do. I am grateful to have been in a time and place where I could be a part of what was needed."

Customers are invited to check the United States Mint online catalog at www.usmint.gov or call toll-free 1-800-USA MINT for the upcoming availability of three-inch bronze duplicates and 1½-inch miniature bronze replicas of the medal.

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